

THE FEAR OF SMALLPOX

IT IS, OFTEN MORE SERIOUS THAN THE DISEASE ITSELF.

Horror So Excites the Afflicted One's Nervous System that He Resists Treatment.

A TALK WITH DR. WAGNER

HE SAYS SMALLPOX IS NOT WORTHY OF ITS IMPORTANCE.

Cleanliness and Vaccination Are Routing It and It Causes Death Very Infrequently.

As Dr. Theodore Wagner, who is an expert in the treatment of smallpox, sat in his office leisurely smoking a cigar one day last week he was startled by the entrance of a man who was deathly pale and whose eyes were wild and haggard. On his forehead and perspiration stood out in huge drops and it could be told by his general demeanor that he was laboring under great agitation. He hurried to the far side of the consulting room, and, throwing himself into a chair, exclaimed, "I've got it, doctor! I've got it!"

"Got what?" asked the doctor, eying his strange caller closely.

"You don't mean to tell me," said the man, starting up from his chair, "that you cannot tell what is the matter with me? Why, I thought it was as plain as the nose on a man's face. Can't you tell, doctor, by my general appearance that I have got the smallpox?"

"The smallpox?" said Dr. Wagner, as he broke into a hearty laugh. "Why, you haven't any more got the smallpox than I have. What made you think you had it?"

"Well, this is the way it came about," said the man, cooled down. "I was walking along the street the other day when I passed a colored man whose face was all broken out, and I said to myself, 'I'll bet that man has the smallpox.' I thought little more about it until to-day—that happened last week—when it seemed that every bone in my body commenced to ache and my throat became sore. It then dawned upon me that what I had surmised about the colored man was correct and that I had contracted the disease from him. I know I have every symptom of it."

"Well, my friend," said Dr. Wagner, convincingly, "you haven't got the smallpox, but you are getting a lovely case of the grip, and my advice to you is to go home and stay in bed to-day and dose up on quinine and by day after to-morrow you will be all right."

After this had been said the man, much relieved, and, in fact, appearing to feel much better already, got up without further ceremony and left. "You see there," said Dr. Wagner, turning to a friend of his who happened to be in the office, "a fair example of the average man's fear of smallpox. And why people hold this disease in such dread is wonderful. Smallpox, except that it is loathsome, is perfectly harmless, unless complications set in; and by the thorough manner in which vaccination is now carried on it is not so harmful as it was some years ago."

DON'T DIE OF SMALLPOX NOW.

"The mortality of smallpox has greatly fallen off in the last twenty or thirty years. In the old days it was nothing strange to hear of a man dying from the disease, which would sometimes carry off whole families. But at the present time it is equally strange to hear of a death occasioned by it. The fatality of this disease is decreasing each year, and the reason for this is that the people of this country are growing more intelligent all the time and are learning how to live better. People are cleaner than they used to be, and they pay more attention to keeping the organic excretions in better condition. Another thing that is greatly against smallpox is the fact that people don't live as closely together as they formerly did. Of course, this statement hardly seems possible when we take into consideration the big tenement houses which we find in the large cities. And there are conditions existing right here in Indianapolis where three or four families are living in one small house. But these are exceptions to the general rule of living, and it is among these people that the smallpox of to-day exists. You don't find many cases among people who live hygienically and they very seldom have the disease unless brought in contact with someone suffering with it."

"You may take the whole catalogue of contagious diseases and you will find that there are fewer deaths caused by smallpox than any of the other diseases, with the exception of chickenpox. The death rate of smallpox is lower than that of measles, and yet people hold it with a hundredfold more dread. I don't know of a contagious disease that is less fatal than the much-feared smallpox."

"Is smallpox feared the same in other countries as in this?" Dr. Wagner was asked.

"No, indeed," he replied. "The fear of smallpox is greater in this country than in any other in the world. This is generally attributed to the fact that it is not so prevalent here as in the old countries, where they have it very nearly all the time. The worst feature attending the smallpox: that we have is the fear of it, and this necessarily gives the patient a great shock and hinders his speedy recovery. The fear which he is subjected to gets his nervous system worked up into such a condition that this very often causes him more suffering than the disease."

VARIOUS COMPLICATIONS.

"On the whole, the mortality of smallpox will not exceed 1 per cent. Now, the principal thing to fear in the treatment of this disease is the fact that complications may set in, and this very often causes death. The first of these to guard against is pneumonia. A patient suffering with smallpox has to be watched very closely by the attending physician to keep this complication out. The second is septic poison, or poison from the pustules, which returns to the body. The third, which is far the worst, is caused by alcohol, as a constant drinker of whisky who contracts the smallpox is very nearly certain to die. The percentage of deaths among this class of people is very great."

"Do physicians treat smallpox in the same manner now as they did some years ago?"

"Yes, the treatment of the disease is practically the same only so far as pitting is concerned. You don't see people with their faces all marked up now like they used to be. There is absolutely no excuse for this to-day, where the means and attention are forthcoming."

"The way to keep a patient from being marked is first to have an experienced nurse and then to have one who knows just when the right time arrives to puncture the pustules. The right period at which the

pustules should be opened is just before the virus turns to pus. The most successful way is to puncture them at the base and let the cap which forms on the top of them drop, and in this manner the pit is protected from the atmosphere. You understand that the pitting, or what is more commonly known as poxmarks, is caused by the cap of the pustule being entirely removed and the pit coming in contact with the air. Of course, the disease requires very close attention for two or three days when the pustules begin to fill, but after they are relieved of the pressure by opening the attention may be somewhat relaxed."

"Smallpox," continued the doctor, "is not a disease of this country, as every one knows. It is found mostly in the warmer climates. You take, for instance, Stanley's book on his travels in Africa and you will find all through it passages describing where numbers of his party have fallen by the way afflicted with smallpox. And Africa is the country in which it is generally thought the disease originated. All along the coast of that country they have smallpox the year through. And you also know that in Manila and all through the Philippine islands they have it continuously among the natives."

"You very often hear people express wonder why it is that smallpox only comes during the winter months, while in the summertime we never hear of it. Now, many are under the impression that it is a winter disease and that warm weather stamps it out. This theory is seen to be false when we take into consideration the fact that in the warmer climates they have it the year round. The reason that we only have it during the cold weather is that we live closer together than in the summer months, when every one spends the greater part of his time out of doors. You take for instance in big tenement houses, where there are large numbers of people living and where a whole family may live in one room. The chances are that this room is reeking with filth and six or seven people are huddled together in it. It is in such a place as this where smallpox breeds, and one of the best preventives of this disease, which every one so much dreads, is perfect cleanliness."

MILD FORM IN THIS CITY.

"There are all forms of smallpox—some of it is very mild and some very serious. The kind which we have in this city at present is very mild. The most serious form of disease is called black smallpox—that is where the pustules fill with blood. This is very rare and nearly always fatal. I have only known of two cases of black smallpox in this city in the last fourteen years, and they both proved fatal. Some people have the disease so lightly that they don't know it. I was standing on the street some time ago, talking to a friend, when a young colored man passed who had a light case of smallpox. I could detect the disease on him, although there was very little about him which denoted that he had it. It is probable that he did not know he was sick himself. I have a patient now in the pesthouse who is rather a prominent man about town. He lived in an apartment house, where, if it had been found out that he had the smallpox, there would have been the greatest consternation. But as no one is any the wiser, and as no one else took it, everything is all right. I was, however, called to see my patient before the disease had begun to break out on him; in fact, his symptoms were so slight that when I took him to the pesthouse those in attendance there greatly doubted that he had it at all. But in a day or so the pustules began to form, and, while he hasn't a very severe case, still he has the smallpox. I notified the man who owned the apartment house, and I fumigated the room myself, so as to know that there is no danger of any one else taking the disease, and that is why I did not have the place quarantined."

VACCINATION SUREST PREVENTIVE.

"Is vaccination the surest preventive of smallpox?"

"Yes," he replied. "In fact, it is the only preventive of it. Many people wonder why vaccination will keep any one from having the smallpox, and, in fact, many go so far as to say that it will not. The reason that vaccination is a preventive of the disease is that it introduces the smallpox into the system. It seems that if the body is thoroughly imbued with smallpox it will not be taken. One of the strangest cases I ever knew of was that of an old attendant we used to have at the pesthouse years ago. He had never had smallpox himself and had been vaccinated. But do you know that he was so saturated with it that he had one or two pustules on his body all the time. You see, it is the same with yellow fever. A man who lives in the South may have a light attack of it from the fact that he has absorbed the germs. Smallpox is a germ disease, just like any of the other contagious diseases."

"It is often thought that if a person is enjoying good health he will not contract smallpox as easily as if he were not. Well, this is not so. If he has not been thoroughly inoculated with cowpox he is as

VERY LIKELY.

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THE VOICE OF THE PULPIT

ISAIAH'S PATRIOTISM: A WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY DISCOURSE.

By the Rev. Robert H. Carson, D. D., Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.

"The vision which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem,"—Isaiah I, 1.

We are about to celebrate the birthday of the father to our great Republic. We, as a Nation, to-day are reaping the harvest that the dead have sown, and as we observe these anniversaries which have to do with our country's early history, we should not forget the sacrifices which the fathers made, and the hardships which they endured in order that we might enjoy the inestimable blessings of liberty and of freedom.

Each generation is confronted with its own dangers and its own difficulties—it is expected not only to conserve whatever of worth and value it has received from the preceding ages, but to hand the possession down increased by its own contribution to those who are to come after.

That we may be enabled to do so, we will endeavor to garner some lessons from Isaiah's vision. Our age is thought to be intensely practical. Ideas, agencies, propositions are judged by their immediate practical results. The results of the man of action are clear, and clearly seen. Judgment can be passed upon such a man almost immediately, nor is any error likely to be made. But it is far different with the thinker and the dreamer. He may be altogether neglected, or contemptuously criticised in his lifetime, for it may be many years after his death before his thought becomes translated into deeds, and his ideas take shape as the governing force of multitudes.

Let us remember, then, how much the world owes to its thinkers and so-called visionaries. It was the vision that came to Abraham which, in the end, resulted in the establishment of Israel and the bringing of a blessing to all mankind. It was the vision which Isaiah had that won his people back from the evil way and restored them for a season to the divine favor and to the blessings of national prosperity.

ORIGIN OF THE BEST.

It is the men who, like Abraham, and Isaiah, and Paul, and Milton, and Washington, and Lincoln, fling their thoughts into the future to whom we owe the best and noblest and purest blessings that we enjoy. If we would play well our part, we, too, must catch the spirit of these men, and have our visions of what it is possible for us and for our country to be and to become. Most of us accept a poor idea of what we can do and be. We live too much by conventional standards, and do not realize how rich and helpful life can be made by the hopes and visions which God gives to every honest heart.

The vision of Isaiah was a wide-embancing one. It did not concern himself and his work alone. It took into its embrace his country and his city. I think we have narrowed the scope of the religious life too much. We have made it merely a personal matter. But Christianity is concerned not only with the immediate results of the individual soul—it is engaged also with the great hope of a divine blessing for all mankind. The vision which Isaiah had was concerning his country and his city. How to help them; how to win them to higher and nobler things; how to make them the abiding place of honest, upright men and women—this, this was part of his religion.

We are told time and again that the church should not interfere in politics. True, the church errs if she become a partisan, but in those great matters which are above every party, in those matters relating to a country's or a city's good government, it is the bounden duty of the Christian pulpit to do all it can. The church must not be indifferent to anything that concerns the moral uplifting of the social well-being of the peoples among whom she is placed. It is at her peril that she remains

indifferent. It is good for us at times to remember the all-embracing conception of the Christian religion, for mankind is indebted for its best and most salutary political and civil blessings to the presence of an earnest, heartfelt, religious faith. The religious life touches all the varied activities in which a man is engaged not only as a man, but as a social being, as a citizen, and as a Christian. Let us then, while we attend to our individual souls, endeavor to have a faith like the faith of the noble Isaiah—the faith that was in Washington—which will take within its compass the well-being and uplift of our city and our country.

SPIRIT OF HOPEFULNESS.

We notice, also, the hopefulness which pervades the prophet's vision. He saw clearly the sins and wrongdoings of his countrymen, but he did not despair. He knew that, bad as was the condition of things, there was a cure: "cease to do evil, learn to do well," and the blessing of God on his people.

We need this spirit of hopefulness very greatly in the present day. We know that civil and political evils abound. Our social conditions are not what they ought to be. It is cowardly to shake our heads and say, as many do, that we cannot hope to remedy the existing evils. It is unmanly to stand aside and let the faithful few fight the battle against tremendous odds. Let us possess the hopeful faith of Israel's great reformer and prophet, and of our own first President. Our country sorely needs men with steel in their blood, with brave, courageous hearts who fear not to attack wrongdoing in high places as well as in low. And of one thing be assured, the issue need never be in doubt. This is God's world, and right must eventually prevail. Preserve at all costs this spirit of hopefulness and never let go the assurance of final victory. "One shall chase a thousand and two shall put ten thousand to flight." This has been verified over and over again when a single soul clad in uprightness and truth has put to confusion the serried hosts of wrongdoing.

We do well to remember our anniversary days. We could wish that amid the pleasure and holiday making our people did not wholly neglect the solemn and serious thoughts that should accompany them.

God hath signally blessed our land since her birthday as a nation. "He hath not dealt so with any people." Great opportunities of doing good, of rising to the highest plane have been granted us. Shall we be accounted worthy or shall it be that, weighed in the balance, we shall be found wanting? You remember Isaiah's patriotism. Shall our feelings for our beloved land be aught less deep than his? Shall we sit idly by and allow, if we can prevent it, the smallest speck to cloud the fair name and fame of the land we love? Nay, nay. We pray God for grace to serve our country in our day and generation, as our patriotic forefathers served it in theirs; for strength to labor for her best interests and her surer establishment in righteousness, for that perfect love which, though it is not blind to faults, grows never weary in its service of faith and devotion.

Battle Flags.

Nothing but flags—yet simple flags. Tattered and torn and hanging in rags: Some walk before them with careless tread, Nor think of the hosts of the patriot dead. That have marched beneath them in days gone by.

With a burning cheek and a kindling eye, And have bathed their folds with their life's young tide, And, dying, blessed them, and, blessing, died.

Nothing but flags—yet methinks at night They tell each other their tales of fight: "Round about standard torn, as they stand in life, As the word is given they charged; they form! And the dim hall rings with the battle's storm. And once again, through smoke and strife, These heroes lead to a nation's life."

Nothing but flags—yet we hold our breath, And gaze with awe at those types of death; Of earnest prayers for the absent men, Of the battlefield and the prison pen. Silent, they speak; and the tear will start As we stand before them with throbbing heart And think of those who are not forgot. Their flag came hither—yet they came not.

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—Francis Gallagher, in Hartford Courant.

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